An Essay
on
Intermittent fever

Respectfully submitted to the
Faculty of the

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of
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Intermittent Fever— By an intermittent fever we understand a constitutional derangement of the Organism marked by three successive and more or less distinct aggravations; Namely; a chilly or cold stage; this subsiding into a hot; and this again into a sweating stage; and these three stages or conditions constitute what is generally known as a Paroxysm

After this paroxysm the patient is generally free from suffering for a deffinite period — this period is termed an intermission; hence the name "Intermittent Fever"

These periods or intermissions observe a marked and singular regularity of termination; after

which the patient is again subject to another Paroxysm with stages similar to the preceding one

Cold Stage— This is the commencement of a Paroxysm when the patient experiences a dull heavy sensation; chills run down the back; the blood recedes from the extremeties and surface of the body; the hands and feet become cold and the nails have a blueish tint— there is a general prostration of strength with great sensation of coldness; chattering of the teeth and difficult inspi=ration The patient complains of pains in the back, loins and limbs; of great distress in the region of the Liver Spleen and of the

Stomach, sometimes of a constrictive headache and at another of a throbing and pulsative pain with feelings as though the head would burst.

Vomiting sometimes ensues with retching and praecordial suffering.

The pulse is weak and variable, sometimes slow, at others quick and intermitting, while again from the severity of the Rigors it is scarcely perceptible This cold stage lasts from one to three hours and gradually merges into the second or hot stage without any discernable intermission

Hot stage, A general abatement of the symptoms of the cold stage introduces the second or hot stage when

the skin gradually becomes hot, red and burning; the pulse regular, strong, hard and greatly accelerated; thirst ensues; the respiration becomes fuller and more free though still frequent and labored; cerebral symptoms arise or become more aggravated and the patient sometimes suffers from delirium. The duration of this stage is from three to six hours when the third or Sweating stage sets in

Sweating Stage. After the hot stage has continued a greater or less period the sweating stage follows which is marked by profuse perspiration, commencing generally on the forhead, sometimes on the extremities, and diffusing itself

over the whole body. As soon as it makes its appearance the patient finds relief, the pains and uneasiness subsides, and there is freedom from suffering until the next Paroxysm

In different cases of intermittent fever these symptoms occur in different degrees, and their order or mode of succession may vary; and the series be more or less complete while the several stages may occupy the time in different proportions

Of the recurrence of the Paroxysms the patient is always admonished by certain unmistakable symptoms; but in each seperate case these symptoms have the widest range of variation. Thus

in one case a sense of thirst, in another a gaping and yawning, in another a coldness of the tips of the fingers, in another nausea &c &c

It must be borne in mind that throughout the whole of the Paroxysm the heat of the body is generally above the normal standard, except the extremities during the cold stage

In some cases the three different stages are passed over with simply the three conditions of chilliness, heat, and sweat, in a greater or lesser degree of exacerbation

Where the Paroxysms return

at regular intervals of twenty-four hours it is termed a Quotidian of forty eight hours a ~~Quartan a~~ Tertian; and of seventy two hours a Quartan,

Intermittents that arise in the Spring of the year are called vernal; and when they arise in the fall or autumn they are denominated autumnal intermittents

There are several peculiarities of Intermittents worthy of notice, one of which is the great susceptibility of renewal from very slight causes, It would appear as though a predisposition is left in the Organism favorable to the recurrence of this disease

In this respect it differs from other fevers; as it is well known that after a continued fever has once invaded the system and been removed; the person so affected is by no means as liable to a fresh attack of the disorder, as is one who had never been attacked.

These renewals observe a singular regularity of periods, hence in this disease the Orthodox school of practice rely for its cure upon what they have termed Anti=periodics; at the head of which stands, preeminently Cinchona Bark or its active principle Quinine

In the first instances, these periods

are the ~~first~~ seventh, fourteenth,
twenty first and twenty eighth days
&c and where there is a cachectic
habit the patient is liable to
a return each succeeding fall
and spring

Intermittents often prove obstinate
in the hands of the Orthodox prac=
titioner and resists the whole list
of his tonics and Anti'periodics
until the patient in dispair flies
to any of the many "Certain Remedies"
the domestic practice of every section
afflicted with this fever affords

Should the disease not be cured
radically as is seldom the case
in these instances, there is always
a great liability to return whenever

there is undue exposure; and any attacks of disease to which the patient may be subjected in after life; will very frequently as=
=sume an intermittent character

Intermittents are rarely fatal in this ~~country~~ section of the United States, or indeed in this country; and when such is the case it is fair to presume some other and more hidden agent has been brought into action

An inflammatory; or as once in my own case; a Nervous fever may change into an intermittent; or an intermittent if it continue may take upon itself the char=
=acter of a Nervous; or an inflam

=matory fever. Observations show that Intermittent fever prevail in low flat sections of country where there is poor drainage; in marshy districts with stagnant waters and rank vegetation; along Rivers and Creeks and in localities contiguous to dams and canals

However much these observations may to go to prove it a Sporadic, or Endemic disease; yet there is not wanting some evidence to show that in these localities it exhibits more or less of an Epidemic character

In the autumn of 1853 an intermittent fever prevailed

throughout the States of New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and some parts of New York; in many localities it had not been for twenty years; and in some instances in places where it had never been known before

The Spring and fall of 53 and 54 it increased and seemed to have attained its Maximum of intensity; it then gradually subsided until the Autumn of 1857 when there was but very few cases, and those ~~that~~ were such as had perhaps been badly treated; or, of persons of a predisposing habit. The seasons just ~~en~~

enumerated presented the
opposit characteristics of wet
and dry seasons; thus the
Summer of 54 was wet; that of
55 moderately ~~dry~~ so; 56 unusually
~~wet~~ dry; while the Summer
of 1857 was unusually wet; — and the
perplexed Physicians loosing
sight of the Epidemic character
of this disease attributed its
presence; in some instances at
least; to the opposite conditions
of a rainy or dry season

Intermittent fever often prevails
in localities such as enumerated
(and here it is sporadic) in
an Epidemic form for some
three or four seasons; when

it will entirly disappear to revisit again when the oldest inhabitant only can recognise it as their old enemy—

The treatment of intermittent fever requires the most carefull study on the part of the medical Practitioner — each individual case requiring to be treated according to the peculiar symptoms that mark its individuality — hence the great difficulty of laying down in a short Essay a satisfactory mode of treatment. Any dilligent Physician however, understanding

the Homoeopathic law of cure and imbued with a proper sense of his professional calling needs not fail of success as our Materia Medica abounds in remedies with which it may be successfully treated.

A word or two in regard to Hygeine in districts or localities where this fever obtains — Avoid as much as possible exposure to the night air. Wear flannel or woolen under clothes — these simple observances are of great importance; as it is at a season of the year (Autumn) when the evenings begin to grow cool; and while the clothing is not yet adapted to the change, that this fever makes its appearance — hence

an exposure to the night air induces a to great and sudden depression of the natural warmth of the body

Avoids as much as possible exposure to an easterly or northeasterly wind or rainstorm; which is always damp and cold, and at this season causes a great fall in the temperature of the air. Avoids sitting or sleeping in cold, damp or ill ventillated appartments, and to this end a fire should be made whenever the atmos=phere is cold, chilly or damp. It will not only warm and dry; but it is also one of the very best means of ventillation. A little fire morn=ings and evenings, notwithstanding it might make it necessary to

throw up the windows; will be of great advantage.

By a strict observance of these few simple rules I have known the health of a family to remain almost unimpaired; while the surrounding neighbors had more or less of Intermittent Fever.